

SUPPORT DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL REPEAL

(Mr. GARAMENDI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, later today we're going to vote on Don't Ask, Don't Tell. This is a personal thing. I know a young gentleman who was in the Army, a graduate of West Point, extraordinary young African American. He's had two tours in Iraq, brought his company back safely from both tours without loss or injury to any member of his company.

But he also honored the commitment of the military not to lie and to be honest and straightforward. He was gay, and he was drummed out of the military. It is an enormous loss to America. I have no doubt that this gentleman would be a general and could probably rise to the highest ranks of the military.

We have to change the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. Later today, we'll have a chance to do that, and I'm sure that our colleagues, in recognition of the need of this Nation for well-qualified men and women in the military, will do away with this policy and set in place an opportunity for every American to serve this country, wherever and whatever their circumstances might be.

TAX CUT PROPOSAL DEFINES CONTRASTING PRIORITIES

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, the tax proposal announced by the President further defines the sharp differences in the policies and priorities of Democrats and Republicans.

Democrats are fighting for the needs of the middle class and for provisions that creates jobs and expands economic opportunities. Republicans are demanding tax breaks for the wealthy.

Democrats continue to fight to maintain tax cuts on income up to \$250,000. Republicans continue to demand tax cuts on all incomes.

Democrats made a priority of extending unemployment benefits to help out-of-work Americans make it through the recession. Republicans were willing to hold the middle class and the unemployed hostage to benefit the wealthy.

Democrats will continue to fight for the economic priorities of middle class Americans, to create jobs, and to grow the economy. These are the principles that define the contrast between the Republicans and Democrats.

□ 1030

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DEGETTE) laid before the House the fol-

lowing communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 15, 2010.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
*The Speaker, U.S. Capitol,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 15, 2010 at 9:40 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 4005.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

APPROVING PURCHASES OF LITTORAL COMBAT SHIPS

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6494) to amend the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 to improve the Littoral Combat Ship program of the Navy, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6494

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. LITTORAL COMBAT SHIP PROGRAM.

(a) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—Subsection (a) of section 121 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111-84; 123 Stat. 2211) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “ten Littoral Combat Ships and 15 Littoral Combat Ship ship control and weapon systems” and inserting “20 Littoral Combat Ships, including any ship control and weapon systems the Secretary determines necessary for such ships.”; and

(B) by striking “a contract” and inserting “one or more contracts”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “liability to” and inserting “liability of”.

(b) TECHNICAL DATA PACKAGE.—Subsection (b)(2)(A) of such section is amended by striking “a second shipyard, as soon as practicable” and inserting “another shipyard to build a design specification for that Littoral Combat Ship”.

(c) LIMITATION OF COSTS.—Subsection (c)(1) of such section is amended by striking “awarded to a contractor selected as part of a procurement” and inserting “under a contract”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. AKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Mississippi?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAYLOR. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the Littoral Combat Ship Program started off as a very good idea. It was to be a single purpose, low-cost war ship that would help our Navy get to the stated goal of at least three Chiefs of Naval Operations of getting back to a 313-ship Navy.

With that said, the program has had, admittedly, a number of problems. First of which was, we were going to build it to commercial specifications. That was a mistake that Congress later corrected because this is a warship. It needed to be built to warship recommendations. You don't build disposable ships unless you want to have disposable crews, and our Nation will never settle for disposable crews.

Madam Speaker, having solved that problem, we found that the two vendors took a ship that was supposed to stand for LCS, Littoral Combat Ship, and it came late, costly, and subject to protest. And only because of the great work, in my opinion, of Under Secretary of Defense Sean Stackley of devising a strategy about a year ago that, in effect, read the riot act to both vendors and told them they were going to do a number of things.

No. 1 in order to submit their package to Congress, their proposal, they were going to submit with that a technical data package which meant that our Nation that has paid to develop these ships would have the specifications to those ships so that if either vendor continued to underperform, we could then go out and seek additional vendors to build this ship if we felt like our Nation was not getting the ship we deserved at the price we need to pay. Under Secretary Stackley came back with a proposal that said we would give to one vendor a contract for 10 ships and then take that technical data package, put it out on the street and give a second vendor a contract for five, a winner-take-all strategy between a monohull ship and a trihull ship and gave the vendors about 8 months to come up with a price.

Madam Speaker, one of the few pleasant surprises of this Congress was that both vendors came back with remarkably good prices when given that all-or-nothing proposal. And I want to compliment, give credit where it's due to Under Secretary Stackley. I also want to give credit where it's due to the Seapower Subcommittee, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN), and the other gentleman from Missouri, Chairman SKELTON, for allowing us to work with Under Secretary Stackley to get this program back under control.